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Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Announces 2007 Poetry Out Loud State Champion

Wed Mar 14, 5:08 PM ET

To: EDUCATION EDITORS

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HARRISBURG, Pa., March 14 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Olivia Meldrum, a Home-schooled student from Juniata County, has been selected as the winner of the Pennsylvania state finals of the 2007 "Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest."

As the state champion, Meldrum will receive \$200 from The Poetry Foundation and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to compete for the national championship during the first week of May. "Poetry Out Loud" will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends at the national finals, with at least one \$20,000 college scholarship for the "Poetry Out Loud" national champion.

"The performances by today's state finalists were very impressive and clearly demonstrated how involvement in the arts can develop and enhance a student's commitment to excellence," said Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Executive Director Philip Horn. "Pennsylvania can be proud of Olivia Meldrum and the other regional winners. She will represent Pennsylvania well at the national contest in Washington."

Meldrum, one of 12 regional finalists, was selected as the winner by a panel of judges in a day-long competition at the Governor's Residence in Harrisburg. Second place went to Luka Glinksy of Erie, and Harry Segal of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District won third place.

The National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation created the "Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest" to encourage high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance and competition. Schools across the state participated in regional competitions hosted by the PCA's Arts in Education Partners and the Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association. The regional winners were:

-- Paige Arthur, Grade 11, Penns Valley Area School District -- winner for Galaxy: The Arts in Education Partnership of Central Intermediate Unit 10; -- Luka Glinksy, Grade 10, Home school -- winner for the Arts Council of Erie; -- Elizabeth Glyptis, Grade 12, West Allegheny School District -- winner for Pittsburgh Center for the Arts; -- Chellsie Heil, Grade 10, Riverside School District -- winner for the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit 19; -- Liann Hochfeld, Grade 12, Pleasant Valley School District -- winner for Allentown Art Museum; -- Olivia Meldrum, Grade 10, Home school -- winner for the Perry County Council of the Arts; -- Erlina Ortiz, Grade 11, Reading School District -- winner for South Central PaARTners: Millersville University; -- Lukas Poost, Grade 12, Home school -- winner for the Northern Tier Partnership for Arts in Education/Bradford County Regional Arts Council; -- Elizabeth Scheib, Grade 11, York Suburban School District -- winner for Cultural Alliance of York County; -- Harry Segal, Grade 10, Tredyffrin/Easttown School District -- winner for Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership; -- Jason Smith, Grade 10, Carlisle Area School District -- winner for Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association; and -- Cody Stewart, Grade 11, Moniteau School District -- winner for ArtsPath: Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

For the state finals, each competitor memorized and prepared to perform three poems selected from print and online poetry anthologies. Evaluation criteria included voice projection and articulation, physical posture and presence, appropriateness of dramatization, evidence of understanding, level of difficulty, overall performance, and accuracy.

The panel of judges for the event included Pennsylvania writers and poets: Daniel Hoffman, Charles Dumas and Shaun Redwood, as well as Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Chairman Diane Dalto and PCA member Susan Corbett. Becky McHugh and Beth Cornell of the Pennsylvania Department of Education served as accuracy judges.

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts started the Pennsylvania Arts in Education Partnership in 1995 to enhance efforts to foster educational excellence through participation in the creative process in schools and community settings. Partners recruit, select, train, place and evaluate artists for residencies in educational environments.

The Pennsylvania Council on the Arts is a state agency under the Governor's Office. Its mission is to foster the excellence, diversity and vitality of the arts in Pennsylvania and to broaden the availability and appreciation of those arts throughout the state. In 2004, the agency was named among government's top 50 "Best and Brightest" in the "Innovations in American Government Awards," a national competition recognizing superior and unique programming initiatives within the public sector.

For more information on the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, visit <http://www.pacouncilonthearts.org>. For further information on "Poetry Out Loud," visit <http://www.poetryoutloud.org>.

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